

## Special Report

# Down that Road Again

### An Investigative Series on the Use of the CoB for Personal Gain

CoB faculty and staff were recently greeted by an e-mail from Janis May, the CoB's Public Relations Manager, announcing that former SAIS Director and Morgan Professor of Accounting James Crockett is holding a book signing to promote his recent release, *Hands in the Till – Embezzlement of Public Monies in Mississippi*. May's e-mail is shown below:

**Date:** Thu, 19 Apr 2007  
**From:** [Janis May <janis.may@usm.edu>](mailto:janis.may@usm.edu)  
**To:** [cob-facstaff@usm.edu](mailto:cob-facstaff@usm.edu)  
**Subject:** [Cob-facstaff] Book signing

Main Street Book Store at 210 North Main Street, downtown Hattiesburg, will host a book signing for Jim Crockett's recently published book, *Hands in the Till--Embezzlement of Public Monies in Mississippi*, Tuesday, April 24, from 5 - 7 p.m. This is Jim's second book published by University Press of Mississippi.

*Hands in the Till* is a true crime report and examination of 37 cases of embezzlement in Mississippi. Jim's previous book was the successful *Operation Pretense: The FBI's Sting on County Corruption in Mississippi*.

As May's e-mail above indicates, *Hands in the Till* is Crockett's second book on public sector corruption in the State of Mississippi, both of which are published by the University Press of Mississippi. Crockett's previous book, *Operation Pretense: The FBI's Sting on County Corruption in Mississippi*, is the subject of a number of reports here at usmnews.net. For an interesting report from the usmnews.net Archives that chronicles the relationship between Crockett's work on *Operation Pretense* and his own spending activities while a full-time member of the CoB faculty, see:

[http://www.usmnews.net/CoB\\_Administrators\\_in\\_Their\\_Own\\_Words\\_3.pdf](http://www.usmnews.net/CoB_Administrators_in_Their_Own_Words_3.pdf)

There are enough reports on what appears to be Crockett's own misuse of public funds while employed for the State of Mississippi himself to warrant two pages in the usmnews.net Archives. These are <http://www.usmnews.net/ethics.html> and <http://www.usmnews.net/crockett1bvp.html>. One report details USM's financial support of Crockett's *Operation Pretense*. The conclusion of that report, which can be found at [http://www.usmnews.net/The\\_Costs\\_of\\_Sponsoring\\_Operation\\_Pretense.pdf](http://www.usmnews.net/The_Costs_of_Sponsoring_Operation_Pretense.pdf), is that USM, through MS taxpayers, spent at least **\$3,694.79** in support of *Operation Pretense*. More than one-half of this total was accounted for by "subvention" payments from USM (i.e., MS taxpayers) directly to the University Press of Mississippi, thus establishing the UPM as a "vanity press." These conclusions are summarized in a table in the report linked above – one that is also inserted below:

**USM Reimbursements for *Operation Pretense***

<u>Date</u>	<u>Source</u>	<u>Reimbursement</u>
1998-99	Morgan Professorship	\$1,694.79
Jun-2002	USMPO-0001008647	<u>\$2,000.00</u>
		\$3,694.79

A number of questions now arise about Crockett's current relationship with both USM (Crockett is currently in so-called "phased retirement") and the UPM. Some of these are:

Just how much did MS taxpayers ultimately forgo to have Crockett's *Operation Pretense* published by the UPM?

How much is being pulled from public coffers to support Crockett's latest venture with the UPM?

Just how "successful" was *Operation Pretense*? And, what portion of Crockett's royalties from that book went to reimburse MS taxpayers for their support?

When, if ever, will Crockett turn his research attention to the *misuse* of public funds by Mississippi's university administrators?

Mississippi taxpayers deserve answers, especially those related to individuals listed in Crockett's books on public sector corruption in Mississippi (for a comparison of Crockett and these individuals, see <http://www.usmnews.net/Pretense%20Table.pdf>).